

ASIA PACIFIC REFUGEE RIGHTS NETWORK

CONCEPT NOTE SHORT COURSE ON REFUGEE RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY 2020 (Revised September 2020)

BACKGROUND

The Short Course on Refugee Rights and Advocacy is an annual capacity building activity organised by the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), in collaboration with academic partners and experts, purposed to increase knowledge, develop critical human-rights understanding relevant to forced migration, and strengthen the capacity of advocates for refugee rights in the Asia Pacific region. This course is typically conducted in Bangkok, bringing participants from around the region to convene in a single venue.

The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed new challenges on refugee protection and movement in the region, especially as regards travel restrictions and border closures. To advance the Short Course under these circumstances, APRRN is required to adapt its programme to best benefit participants under restricted accessibility.

OBJECTIVE

This course will have a particular focus on examining the impacts of COVID-19 on refugee rights and the different areas of protection, including strategies to mitigate these and future effects. By imparting the knowledge and skills of different focus areas for advocacy, participants will engage in a series of modules practical for their work.

The course will cover the following thematic areas:

- Overview and updates on forced migration in the Asia Pacific amidst COVID-19
- Women, gender, diversity, and intersectionality
- Inclusion of refugees and community engagement strategies for effective advocacy
- Global developments in policies, international refugee law, and relevant human rights law
- Regional collaboration and protection mechanisms
- Introduction to advocacy, challenges, and exploring effective strategies for national-level advocacy (e.g. Working and advocating with local authorities, engaging National Human Rights Commissions, strategic litigation, public narratives, media)

DATES

Date: 24 November to 18 December 2020

Structure: Two days per week, three hours per day

The course will also incorporate a one-day “Practitioners’ Roundtable on the Right to Work” event which will engage a range of stakeholders to assess opportunities for advancing work rights, discuss legal frameworks and litigation strategies, and strategise advocacy on national and regional levels.

COURSE APPROACH AND RATIONALE

The Short Course will be conducted online across a three-week period. The course will commence from 24 November to 18 December 2020, two days per week, three hours per day. Each week, participants will be taken through sessions which cover different considerations for advocacy and practical skills for strategic planning. Given that the Short Course is typically content-heavy, migration and replication of the present methodology online will likely impact learning outcomes. The extended length of the course is hence purposed to ensure effective delivery of the content of the curriculum,

to provide sufficient space for application in the development of advocacy plans, while ensuring meaningful interaction amongst participants. The course content is divided into smaller more manageable sections to ensure interactivity and engagement while better facilitating learning.

Course Modules

The course will consist of a series of presentations, case studies, group work, discussions, and experience-sharing/learning. There will be four main modules with clusters of relevant topics within each module.

Module 1: Introduction to Refugee Rights and Advocacy

This module will cover the fundamentals of refugee rights, examining the local and global challenges, and developments since the emergence of COVID-19

Module 2: Instruments and Channels for Advocacy

This module will cover national, regional, and international mechanisms and avenues for advocacy

Module 3: Elements of Advocacy

This module will cover critical considerations in advocacy, including gender, ethics, and inclusion of refugees

Module 4: Putting Advocacy into Action

This module will take participants through the process of strategic advocacy planning

Participants will each be required to prepare a short presentation on an advocacy issue or area of interest to the group. These could be actual scenarios from work or issues seen emerging within their national contexts. Participants will choose a few main issues to focus on and develop advocacy plans throughout the Short Course. Core groups with similar advocacy interests will then be formed. These core groups will primarily be grouped according to countries to promote localisation, the building of national networks or consortiums, and effecting change at a national level.

The course will be presented by some of the leading experts working on forced migration issues in the region. They include academicians, activists, legal advocates, UNHCR representatives, and NGO workers. During the course, participants will be given access to curated reading lists, pre-recorded presentations, and a forum for exchange, exercises, and discussion. Participants will be able to discuss the content of the presentations with the group and resource persons online.

Participants are encouraged to take follow-up actions after the course, such as forming national working groups, networks, formulating strategic plans targeted toward particular issues, with access to support from APRRN and resource persons from the Short Course.

PARTICIPANTS

About 20-25 participants are expected to join this course. The selection criteria for participants are:

- Mid- to high-level staff in a national, sub-regional or regional NGOs/CSOs in the Asia Pacific
- People who have been refugees or are currently under asylum in the Asia Pacific
- Minimum of 2 years' experience in the field of forced migration/refugee rights
- Commitment to working in the same organisation at least until the end of 2021
- Ideally some experience and background in policy and advocacy work (not required)

- Ability to communicate in English (both spoken and written) as the course will be conducted in English and no translation facilities will be provided

For Consideration

1. *Funds for flights and accommodation to be channelled into small grants for the incubation of advocacy project ideas - supporting the development of potential advocacy plans from this Short Course. These small grants can be used to fund practical activities such as consultations with refugee communities around a particular issue.*